

self like to join the dance After long controversy with Catholicism the Protestant no longer finds it so outrageous and might even enjoy hearing a Mass.

Is there a day and night in history, as in nature? Dawn began with the third century of Christianity. Then came the

melancholy sunset glow of the neo-Platonists. The middle ages were dark night. Now the light of day is dawning. I greet you, Phoebus Apollo! What dreams during that night, what ghosts, what sleep-walkers, what rioting in the streets, what violence and sudden death—Let me tell you about it.

## Home of the Brave

**PROFILES IN COURAGE.** By John F. Kennedy. Harper and Brothers. \$3.50.

By George Dangerfield

THE COURAGE examined in this book is the courage of elected representatives to pit their own best judgment against the wishes of their colleagues, or their constituents or the weight of public opinion. The very nature of representative institutions makes this exercise of the freedom of conscience not only a dangerous but a delicate matter; and Senator Kennedy would have been displaying courage above and beyond the call of duty if he had not presented in his final chapter a formidable list of reasons or occasions for not exercising it at all.

He draws his eight examples of political courage from the history of the Senate, beginning with John Quincy Adams' defection from the Federalists in 1807 and ending with Robert A. Taft's attack on the Nuremburg trials in 1948. As regards political philosophies, he is an eclectic—in the sense, at least, that any philosophy will serve to produce an act of courage. "I make no claim that all those who staked their careers to speak their minds were right."

Senator Daniel Webster, for example, is courageous because he supported the Compromise of 1850 and Senator Thomas Hart Benton is courageous because he opposed it. In other words, the test of courage is that one man exposed himself to damaging criticism in Massachusetts and the other to damaging criticism in Missouri. Benton was a blustering and passionate egocentric, which may have been a factor in his opposition: but it is well known that he was not only not an abolitionist but

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scarcely even a Free Soiler, and it is a fair assumption that he opposed the compromise out of a bitter and disinterested contempt for the slave power. Webster's "Oration of March the Seventh" was one of the greatest that even he ever delivered in point of rhetoric: but was he speaking only out of love for the Union, or did he have one eye on Southern support for the tariff? If he did—and the point is arguable—surely courage for the tariff is not quite so high as courage against the slave power.

Kennedy's eclecticism, none the less, compels him to the rather odd conclusion concerning his eight men that "Surely their courage was of equal value, though of different caliber." I take this to mean that there are no degrees of morality in moral courage, but only degrees of importance as regards the effect of an act of moral courage. Obviously, Senator Ross performed a more important act when he voted against the impeachment of President Johnson in 1868 than Senator Lamar did when he voted against the Bland-Allison Silver Bill in 1878: but, considering the relative virulence of the hatred which each man confronted, it seems reasonable to believe also that Ross's courage was of a higher moral value than Lamar's. It is difficult to say whether Senator Norris' filibuster against the Armed Ship Bill of 1917 was more important than Senator Adams' support of the Embargo in 1807—not only difficult to say, but absurd to try to say—but since Norris had everything to lose but his integrity and Adams had a good deal to gain, I should say that Norris' courage was the more moral.

Six of the eight examples of courage occurred before 1880. What this means as regards the Seventeenth Amendment, or the trend toward popular election of Senators which began in the '90s, it would be difficult to say: but it does seem to indicate that as society grows more highly organized, political personali-

ties tend to become less apparently emphatic; and that, as techniques of government become more complex and impersonal, individualistic feats of courage are less noticeable and possibly less decisive. They are still just as necessary, perhaps more so; although one single feat is no test of statesmanship or political worth. The record as a whole is the test, or the final tendency of the record—Adams' great battle for the right of public petition, for example, or Norris' great fight for public electrification—and legislative success does not necessarily get the highest marks.

If one could draw a moral from this valuable if somewhat hasty book it would be contained in these words of George W. Norris: "Whatever use I have been to progressive civilization has been accomplished in the things I failed to do rather than in the things I did do." If the cause is humane and progressive, there is in the long run no such thing as failure. In the long run, of course, as J. M. Keynes said, we are all dead; but that was Norris' point. The greatest victories are won by men who never lived to see them, and never expected to.

### DR. B. LIBER

has been a general physician since 1904 and a psychiatrist since 1925. He has had an interesting life in his childhood, in his student years and later, as a doctor, writer and educator. He has participated in advanced movements both in Europe and in this country and yet has always been independent in his ideas and actions. Now, over eighty years old he has written a book he believes should be read by every one.

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